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ROMANCE AND ROMANIC

BY E. S. SHELDON

Both these words are in frequent use in English as adjectives applied to the languages descended from Vulgar Latin primarily. Both are of respectable age, the first quotation for *Romanic* (apparently from a late Latin *Romanicus*, perhaps after the analogy of the earlier *Germanic*) in the great Oxford dictionary being dated 1708, while the oldest one for *Romance* used attributively or as an adjective according to that dictionary is of 1420. The quotation is in part: "Item lego . . . filiola meæ unum [in the publication referred to the Roman numeral j = i is printed] romance boke, is callyd ye gospelles," but the others are all of the eighteenth century or later, and the two of the eighteenth century show the word used with *tongue* (1756-82) or *language* (1776). The 1420 case may be, as it is regarded in the Oxford dictionary, merely an attributive use of the English noun *romance*, "the vernacular language of France, as opposed to Latin," to quote the first part of the first definition in that dictionary, and not as "in later use also extended to related form of speech as Provençal and Spanish," etc., these words being the second part of the same paragraph.

Moreover, it seems probable that the use in the eighteenth century and later is not, as the example of 1420 may well be, an attributive or adjective use of the English noun *romance* in any sense, but that it really is an independent and direct borrowing of the eighteenth-century French feminine adjective with an accompanying noun meaning 'language.' If so, then the two quotations of that century seem to be really the first unmistakable instances of a true adjective *Romance* in the sense now common.

It should, however, be added that under the first definition of the word as a real noun the second paragraph of the quotations (for the "later use") gives as the earliest date the year 1612. I think the word here is really the noun, but it does not seem impossible to take it as an adjective. The words quoted are "The Italian, French, and Spanish: all which in a barbarous word have been

called Romanse, as you would say, Roman ”¹ We may even notice the use of the word in the earliest example of the noun: “c. 1330 R. BRUNNE *Chron. Wace* (Rolls) 16701 Frankysche speche ys cald Romaunce” [to this I add the next line, which finishes the sentence: So sey þis clerkes & men of ffraunce], for one might possibly consider the word to be an adjective. But no stress need be laid on this at best doubtful case. Certainly these English instances do not establish the existence of an Old French adjective *romanz*.

A better case, pointing with more probability to a sixteenth century French adjective use of the old noun *romanz* in its later form *romant*, is to be found under *romaunt* in its second sense, “a Romance form of speech; also attrib., Romance, Romanic, in respect of language. In quots. applied to older French and to Romansh. 1530 Palsgr. *Introd.* 41 *Mye* is an old Romant word . . . Ibid. 486/2 It [*adherdre*] is an olde Romant worde and now lytle used.” I may quote the preceding words from Palsgrave: “Though I fynde it moche used in the Romante of the Rose, it is,” etc. With the form *Romant* may be compared modern French *romand*, as in *la Suisse romande*.

It accordingly seems advisable to inquire how such an adjective came to exist in French, and what its history is in French. Just as the word *Romanic* points to a late Latin adjective *Romanicus*, parallel in formation to Latin *Germanicus* from *Germanus*, so the Old French *romanz*, a very common noun, goes back to a late Latin adverb *Romanice*. In Latin ‘to speak Latin,’ ‘to speak Greek,’ etc., was expressed by using the adverb, not the adjective used substantively, *Latine loqui*, *Graece loqui*, etc., and so in late Latin *Romanice* was the word used with reference to the Vulgar Latin, and, in its Old French form, to French. The French, however, used the adjective as a substantive in general in such phrases: *parler français, anglais*, etc., and accordingly the original adverb was felt and used as a noun, *romanz*. And why not also as an

¹I have verified this in the edition of Brerewood’s work (*Enquiries touching the diversity of languages, and religions*, etc.) dated 1674, in the Harvard library. The library has an edition of 1614, but it does not contain the final chapter, in which this passage occurs. In the edition of 1674 that chapter is headed, “Of the Languages of the People of Europe Collected out of Jo. Scaliger.” The reference to p. 250 happens to fit that edition.

adjective, since *français*, *anglais*, etc., are adjectives as well as nouns? That such was the case appears from the Old French form *romance* as a feminine adjective, simply the word *romanz* inflected like an adjective. This feminine form is very rare, but it is recorded as occurring in the prologue to a translation of the Psalter belonging in the fourteenth century, in 1365, and edited by Apfelstedt in vol. iv of Foerster's *Altfranzösische Bibliothek* under the title, *Lothringischer Psalter* (Bibl. Mazarine No. 798). Here we read (p. 1): "Vez ci lou psaultier dou latin trait et translateit en romans en laingue lorenne . . . pour tant que laingue romance et especiaulment de Loreenne est imperfecte," etc., and (p. 2): "est laingue romance si corrupue qu'a poinne li uns entent l'autre."

It is difficult, or rather it is impossible not to connect this *laingue romance* with the same words used in French in the eighteenth century, but it is also difficult to find the desired connecting links. Let me give such evidence as I have found for the Old French or early modern French, especially for the masculine form.

The English adjective use of *romance*, as we have seen, does not absolutely prove an early French use of the noun *romanz* (later *romans*, *romant*, and *roman*) as an adjective, and the Old French and modern French dictionaries give us almost no help. It is true that under the adjective *roman* Littré's *Historique* gives the following for the sixteenth century: "On appella roman nostre nouveau langage, pour ce qu'il estoit corrompu du vray romain; je trouve un passage où on l'appelle rustique roman, *Pasquier, Recherches*, VIII, p. 654, dans *Lacurne*." ² I add two passages from the Amsterdam edition, vol. I, livre VIII, chap. I: "Ainsi s'eschangea nostre vieille Langue Gauloise en un Vulgaire Roman, tellement que là où nos vieux Gaulois avoient leur propre langage que l'on appelloit Walon, ceux qui leur succederent appellerent le langage plus moderne, Roman: parce qu'il sembloit avoir pris son origine des mots Romains," etc. (col. 753); and "Cela apporta entre nous une distinction de deux langages, l'un comme j'ay dit, appelé *Roman*, et l'autre *Walon*, qui approchoit plus près de la naïveté du vieux

²In the Amsterdam edition of Pasquier's Works, vol. I (1723), the passage reads: "De là vint aussi qu'on appella Roman nostre nouveau langage. Vray que pource qu'il estoit corrompu du vray Romain, je trouve un passage où on l'appelle Rustique Roman" (col. 754). I have not been able to compare an earlier edition.

Gaulois: distinction qui s'est transmise jusques à nous: car aux Pays-bas ils se disent parler le *Walon*, et que nous parlons le *Roman*" (coll. 754-55). The confusion between *romanz*, *romans*, *roman* (from *Romanice*) and *Romanus* appears later in Raynouard; see for instance the *Lexique Roman*, s. v. *roman*. Indeed it may well be asked whether the present-day French adjective *roman* is not really the result of this same confusion. Is it not partly due to Raynouard, whose use of the word as meaning Provençal I need hardly mention?

The invaluable work of Du Cange, with the additions of others, as found in Henschel's edition (the later edition of L. Favre adds nothing for our purpose) gives us further light. Here we find, s. v. *Romania*, under the date of 1366, a passage in Old French containing these words: "se aucun ou aucuns de noz hommes ou subgez en Romanz pays avoient meffait," and "de contraindre les preneurs noz hommes ou subgez en pays Romanz a rendre," etc. Also there is entered an adjective *Romansius* with a quotation (. . . in lingua Franciae in verbis Romansiis . . .) dated 1476; and *Romancia* appears entered as a noun with the definition *lingua vulgaris* and a quotation dated 1408 containing the words "in Romancia seu layca lingua," and another of the year 1449 in which occurs "loquebatur in Romancia seu lingua laica." Obviously this *Romancia* is properly the feminine adjective, and all these mediæval Latin forms are from the Old French (or Provençal).

One or two more examples of the adjective I get through Voelker's article in the *Zs. f. roman. Philologie*, x, 485 ff. He says (p. 497): "Auch die Bezeichnung 'livres roumans' findet sich mehrfach, z. B. aus d. J. 1404 'Inventoire des livres roumans de feu Monseigneur Philippe le Hardi' (Barrois, Bibl. Prototypogr. S. 105. Ebenso S. 111, 112)." All three instances of the phrase occur in heading or sub-headings in inventories. Those on pages 111 and 112 are a little later in the fifteenth century. This use rather strongly suggests that the English example of the year 1420 (romance boke) may really represent the Old French *livre romans* and that *romance* may there be a true adjective from the contemporary French adjective.

It seems clear that the adjective *romanz* should be added to the Old French dictionary and under this heading the feminine *romance*, already well-known, would find its proper place. It should not head the entry.

A form corresponding to English *Romanic* seems to be comparatively little used in Romance countries. For English the form is a natural one, having in its favor the analogy of the apparently older word *Germanic*, also *Hispanic* and perhaps other words. Next to France Italy is the neo-Latin country in which philological studies have been most vigorously and successfully carried on, and the usual Italian adjective is *romanzo*. In Spanish I find both *romanico* and *romance* for the adjective, the former being apparently preferred in the *Revista de filol. Española*; see for both the bibliographical list in, for example, vol. I, p. 439. The only example of a French *romanique* in our sense that I happen to have noticed is in Damé's *Dict. Roumain-Français*, s. v. *romanic*, where *o limbă romanică* is rendered into French by *une langue romanique*.

On the other hand, it may be urged against *Romance* in English that it has no English parallels, and that only scholars would appreciate its interesting origin and history, others being likely to regard it as simply an adjective use of the English noun *romance* in its now commonest sense, and to write it accordingly with a small letter instead of a capital.

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